

REMARKS

Figure 33 has been amended to indicate that it shows the prior art, as requested in the Official Action.

As requested in the Official Action, the specification has been reviewed. No errors affecting the understanding of the invention were noted.

Claims 1-24 were pending. Claims 1-2, 4-6, 8-16, 18-20 and 23-24 have been canceled and claims 25-35 have been added, leaving claims 3, 7, 17, 21-22 and 25-35 in the application.

Claims 1-24 were rejected under §112, second paragraph. The new and amended claims are believed to be proper as to form and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 7, 17 and 21-22 were rejected as anticipated by ASAHI JP 2000-069510. Please note that U.S. Patent 6,532,089 corresponds to this reference and that the U.S. text has been used to evaluate the relevance of this reference. If the U.S. text varies from the translation of the Japanese text relied upon by the Examiner, then the Examiner is respectfully requested to point out those differences. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 7, 17 and 21-22 are directed to embodiments of the present invention in which light signals input at any one of the first (input) ports are output from any two of the second

(output) ports when supervising the light signals and are output from a predetermined one of the second ports when not supervising the light signals, and in which the quality of light signals output from either of the second ports is supervised only when performing the supervising.

That is, these claims define situations when light signals are being supervised and when they are not being supervised, and provide that the number of output ports to which the input light signal is directed depends on whether the light signals are being supervised.

In contrast, ASAHI discloses that the light signals are always being supervised. There is no situation when the light signals are not being supervised. As is apparent from column 9, lines 57-62 in the U.S. text and from the figures, every one of the output ports has a monitor connected thereto. There is no situation where monitoring does not take place. Accordingly, these claims avoid the rejection under §102.

The present invention seeks to improve upon ASAHI by removing the monitors from all but one of the outputs and by splitting and routing the output light signals to the one remaining monitor one-at-a time. Thus, there are situations when the light signal is not being supervised (the light signals that are not split and are not sent to the detector) and when the light signal is being supervised (the light signals that are

split with one part being sent to the detector). ASAHI does not contemplate the situations when supervising does not take place because it has monitors at every output port.

The new claims define embodiments of the invention in which light signals received at n input ports, n being at least two, are directed to at least one of $n+1$ output ports, at least one of light signal quality and management information are detected at only one of the $n+1$ output ports, and in which the light signals are controlled so that a light signal received at a selected one of the input ports is directed to two of the output ports, including the one output port at which the detecting occurs. This is illustrated, by way of example, in Figures 12-13, 21, 27-28 and 31.

ASAHI does not disclose detecting at least one of light signal quality and management information only at one of the output ports and controlling the light signals so that a light signal received at a selected one of the input ports is directed to two of the output ports, including the one output port at which the detecting occurs. Accordingly, the new claims avoid the rejections of record.

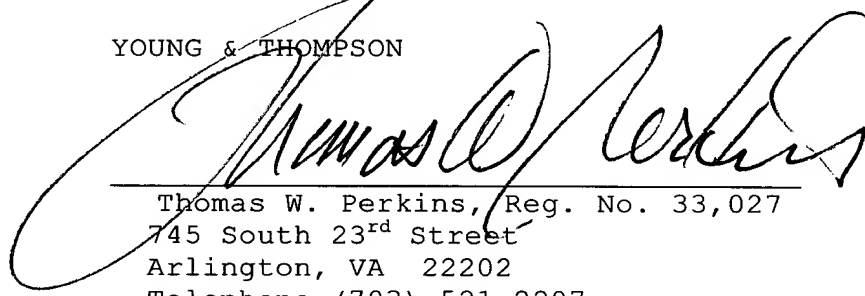
The applied references also do not disclose or suggest the feature of claims 26 and 30 in which the switch controller selects each of the input ports one at a time so that the switch selectively directs light signals received at each of the input

ports to two of the output ports, including the one output port having the detector connected thereto. Accordingly, these claims are further distinguishable from the applied references.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas W. Perkins', is written over the printed name and address.

Thomas W. Perkins, Reg. No. 33,027
745 South 23rd Street
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone (703) 521-2297
Telefax (703) 685-0573
(703) 979-4709

TWP/lk

APPENDIX:

The Appendix includes the following item:

- a Replacement Sheet for Figure 33 of the drawings